REVENUE SECRETARIAT.

Grazing Facilities.

Calling for objections or suggestions within two months in regard to the changes proposed to be introduced in *re*.—

No. I. C. 6125—FT. 226-18-10, DATED 10TH APRIL 1923.

The following official paper is published for general information :—

In June 1919 the Government published a draft Resolution indicating the directions in which improvements might be effected in the matter of providing adequate grazing facilities for the agricultural stock in the State and invited the criticism of the public in regard to certain lines of action suggested therein. No response whatever was received from the public but the question has been carefully considered by Government in consultation with the officers of the Revenue, the Agricultural and the Forest Departments. The Government are now in a position to indicate what, in their opinion, are the definite measures to be taken to improve the existing grazing facilities.

2. These views, which are tentative in character, are again *published* for general information, as, in an important matter like this affecting the interest of the agricultural community as a whole, the Government are desirous of considering any objections that may be brought forward before passing final orders.

Objections, if any, may be sent to the Secretary to Government, General Department, *within two months from the date of the publication* of this official paper.

3. The grazing facilities now enjoyed by the people in the State are :—

(1) Free grazing in gomal lands, *i.e.*, lands set apart for each village for free grazing.

(2) Grazing in *hulbanni* lands, *i.e.*, grazing in the assessed waste and kharab lands on payment of a nominal fee every year.

(3) Grazing in State Forests and plantations. Except where the villagers enjoy the right of grazing free or on a lumpsum payment in the forests adjoining their villages, grazing in State Forests is allowed only under the permit system at the following rates :—

	Ordinary.			Nomad.		
	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
Cows and oxen ...	0	4	0	0	6	0
Buffaloes ...	0	8	0	0	12	0
Sheep ...	0	1	6	0	2	0

N. B.—Goats are not permitted to graze and calves under one year are not charged any fee.

4. The Government now propose to introduce the following systems of grazing which are calculated to put the people in closer touch with the management and the consequent improvement of grazing areas and to prevent unnecessary interference by the forest subordinates in regard to grazing in State Forests and plantations.

5. *Gomal lands.*—The following rules may be adopted for the management of grazing in gomal lands which are now subjected to reckless overgrazing and to the impoverishment of the soil. The Panchayets proposed to be constituted under these rules may also be given power to lease out select portions on a rental, a portion of the rental so realised being spent for the improvement of the gomal.

I. To conserve and improve the Gomal in Government villages and to regulate the grazing thereon, a Panchayet may be constituted of influential and intelligent men in the village or villages to which the right of grazing extends.

II. In villages for which Panchayets have been constituted under the Local Boards Regulation, such Panchayets shall administer these Rules. For other villages, the Amildars will constitute the Panchayets and nominate the Panchayetdars; appeals as regards nomination lying to the Sub-Division Officers, whose decisions will be final. The patel of the village will ordinarily be the Chairman of the Panchayet. But where he is unable or unwilling to undertake the work, any other respectable land-holder in the village may be appointed as Chairman for reasons to be recorded by the Amildar.

III. The strength of a Panchayet specially formed under these rules will not exceed 12, the actual strength for each village being fixed by the Amildar on due consideration of the population of the village.

IV. The Panchayet shall have power—

(a) to prohibit during a particular season of the year (such as the non-cultivation season) the trespassing of any cattle on the whole or any portion of the gomal;

(b) to conserve, in such manner as the Panchayet may consider proper, the area without prejudice to the right of Government to dispose of it for cultivation;

(c) to sell the right of cutting and removing grass in the conserved area;

(d) to form a fund called "The Village Grazing Fund" out of the sale proceeds of the grass mentioned in clause (c), to keep the fund in the Government Savings Bank and administer it; and

(e) to meet out of the fund the incidental charges for fencing, watching the conserved area, etc.

V. The Panchayet's decision in respect of matters mentioned above shall be appealable to the Amildar, a second appeal lying to the Sub-Division Officer, whose decision shall be final.

VI. The Panchayet shall meet as often as possible and not less than once a month, and concert measures for the improvement of their grazing lands. A continuous record of the proceedings of the meetings should be maintained by the Chairman of the Panchayet.

VII. It will be the duty of the village officers to render all necessary help to the Panchayets in furtherence of their object.

6. *Hulbanni lands.*—The system of hulbanni sales prevailing in the State, is far from satisfactory. Government are of opinion that the management of all lands now sold for grazing under the hulbanni system may be given over to one or other of the Village Committees or Panchayets who may be willing to come forward to regulate the grazing in them and to undertake to improve them. The transfer of such rights may be made subject to the following conditions:—

(i) An amount calculated at the rate of two annas per acre of assessed and at one anna per acre of unassessed waste land shall be levied. Half of the revenue so realized will be given to the Village Local Bodies or to the Panchayets who will be expected to utilise the amounts towards the improvement of the grazing lands, their conservation and watch or for such other purposes as may be indicated by Government.

(ii) Cattle, goats and sheep, other than purely local, shall be excluded.

(iii) Grazing will be restricted to a prescribed number of cattle belonging to the village.

Where no local committee as indicated above is prepared to come forward to take up the right of grazing, the same may be sold by public auction.

7. *Grazing in State Forests.*—At present, the disposal of grazing in State Forests is effected in three ways:—

(1) "*Levey of license fees*".—Grazing by licenses is generally resorted to in almost all the State Forests. Horned cattle and sheep are admitted to the forests for six months in the year between June and December on payment of a fixed scale of fees as noted in the margin. Concession rates at half the license fees and sometimes free grazing is permitted in respect of cattle belonging to villages which have contributed lands for the formation of State Forests, or which do not possess sufficient grazing areas, according to the decisions recorded at the time of the settlement of the forests concerned.

	Ordinary licenses	Nomad licenses
Cow and oxen	4 annas per head.	6 annas per head
Buffaloes	8 "	12 "
Sheep	1½ "	2 "

(2) "*Lumpsum levy of grazing fees.*"—This method is largely adopted in the Chitaldrug District and to a small extent, in other districts. The cattle in the villages in the neighbourhood of State Forests are enumerated and a lumpsum fee fixed for each village calculated at full license rates for half the number of cattle in the village, the amount so fixed being subject to revision periodically at the discretion of the Forest authorities. Villagers who are averse to take advantage of this concession are at liberty to graze their cattle in the State Forests on payment of the usual license fees.

(3) "*Lease of plantations and sale of grass crop.*"—In some plantations declared as State Forests, the grass is leased out. The lessees in their turn sublet the grazing at rates fixed by them per head of cattle.

In future the grazing in State Forests is proposed to be dealt with as follows:—

(1) *Kancha system.*—This system has been tried with success in certain districts of the Madras Presidency. Under this system, open portions of forests are divided into grazing blocks or Kanchas which are sold by auction subject to an upset price generally of four annas per acre.

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The Kanchas are closed to grazing for a defined part of the year (July to end of October) and the number of cattle to be admitted is limited to the grazing capacity of the block, *i.e.*, one cow unit for every two acres and one sheep for every acre. The Kanchadar is held responsible for the protection of tree growth, etc., in the Kanchas and in the event of his infringing any of the conditions, his lease is liable to be cancelled and he may be required to pay the compensation that may be fixed for any damage that he may have caused or permitted. Under this system the growth of grass is insured and the lands better protected while the interference of subordinate officials is eliminated. The system enables village communities as well as individual raiyats to lease Kanchas for their exclusive use. In Madras it has also had the effect of inducing raiyats to combine together and form Panchayets in order to obtain lease of Kanchas. The rent may in some cases be fairly high and bring in a good revenue to Government but the money is mostly utilised for improving the grazing blocks by digging and deepening wells and introducing better kinds of grass-growth.

The Revenue Commissioner, the Conservator of Forests and the Director of Agriculture as also most of the Deputy Commissioners who were consulted, are of opinion that the Kancha System may be tried in selected localities and extended gradually. The Conservator of Forests is of opinion that the Kanchas should be properly demarcated and closed for grazing from June to November to suit local requirements, but that they need not be fenced in until the system is made permanent.

Government are of opinion that the Kancha System may be introduced as an experimental measure in a few select open forest areas in the maidan parts of the State.

(2) *Village Forest System.*—In order to meet the cases of villages which, under Forest Settlement, have been conceded privilege of grazing their cattle free or at concession rates, Government propose the adoption of what may be called "the Village Forest System." The conditions governing the system will be as follows :—

(*a*) Separate blocks of open forest will be constituted for the different villages or groups of villages.

(*b*) The blocks will be demarcated and will, as far as possible, be extensive enough to provide grazing for the entire number of cattle which the villagers are entitled to graze.

(*c*) Grazing fees will be charged according to the terms of the Forest Settlement but they will be commuted as far as possible into a lumpsum payment.

(*d*) The continuance of the privilege will be conditional on the fulfilment of certain specific obligations by the villagers, *e. g.*, protection of forest from fire and other damages.

(*e*) Forest subordinates will check from time to time the number of cattle grazed and the condition of the block. Abuses of privileges will be punished by the impounding of the cattle.

8. *The Permit System.*—The system of grazing in State Forests on prepaid permits issued by the Forest Department has been found to be generally associated with grave abuses; and Government are of opinion that it should be abolished altogether in favour of the Kancha System, which leaves the management of grazing in the State Forests to the villages on conditions advantageous both to the people as well as to the forest.

9. It is also proposed to make it incumbent on the Forest Department to spend a portion of the revenue realised by it by the disposal of grazing rights, in providing improved facilities in the areas given out for grazing, *viz.*,

(1) The provision of facilities for watering cattle;
(2) Fencing grazing blocks; and
(3) Growing better kinds of grass.

10. Government are also considering the question of granting on hulgaval tenure, lands relinquished by the Amrut Mahal Department with a view to encouraging the formation of private pastures as they believe that such pastures are generally looked after with greater care than *gomal* or *hulbanni* lands.

T. E. JEYARAMA AIYAR,
Secy. to Govt., Rev. Dept.